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THE MEANING OF SELFHOOD AND FAITH IN IMMORTALITY

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The Ingersoll Lecture, 1928

THE MEANING OF SELFHOOD AND FAITH IN IMMORTALITY

BY

EUGENE WILLIAM LYMAN
Professor of the Philosophy of Religion
Union Theological Seminary

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THE INGERSOLL LECTURESHIP

Extract from the will of Miss Caroline Haskell Ingersoll, who died in Keene, County of Cheshire, New Hampshire, Jan. 26, 1883

First. In carrying out the wishes of my late beloved father, George Goldthwait Ingersoll, as declared by him in his last will and testament, I give and bequeath to Harvard University in Cambridge, Mass., where my late father was graduated, and which he always held in love and honor, the sum of Five thousand dollars ($5,000) as a fund for the establishment of a Lectureship on a plan somewhat similar to that of the Dudleian lecture, that is — one lecture to be delivered each year, on any convenient day between the last day of May and the first day of December, on this subject, "the Immortality of Man," said lecture not to form a part of the usual college course, nor to be delivered by any Professor or Tutor as part of his usual routine of instruction, though any such Professor or Tutor may be appointed to such service. The choice of said lecturer is not to be limited to any one religious denomination, nor to any one profession, but may be that of either clergyman or layman, the appointment to take place at least six months before the delivery of said lecture. . . . The same lecture to be named and known as "the Ingersoll lecture on the Immortality of Man."

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THE MEANING OF SELF-HOOD AND FAITH IN IMMORTALITY

AS WE approach the subject of immortality here tonight it will be well for us to realize the danger which lies in a detached consideration of the problem, and to do what we can to overcome that danger. Belief in an immortal life is intimately bound up with what we believe life itself to be. Belief that man has the capacity to become a permanent part of the universe is inevitably influenced by the beliefs about the universe to which one's total education has led up. And in general our beliefs — both from the standpoint of their practical meaning and from that of their rationality — should be thought

of as closely interwoven and as deriving their value and validity largely from the texture of the whole.

Let us then think together concerning immortality for the space of this hour, not as if its truth were a matter of a single syllogism or a detached postulate, but from the standpoint of our common desire to penetrate as deeply as we may into the meaning of life and to gain some unified interpretation of our universe. For even though we should succeed in constructing a single arch of truth through which, as through a window, we can look out upon human life as a matter of infinite perspectives and of boundless reach — a window to which we can return at will for such a vision — still we realize that the arch of this window will need to be a permanent part of some edifice of truth, if it is to be proof against the wind and weather of man's ever-changing experience.

Thus we are hardly in touch with our subject unless we recognize that belief in immortality will not long be held as a sheer faith, or as a mere appendix or footnote — loosely attached to the main body of our reasoned beliefs. Kant presented his three postulates — God, Freedom, and Immortality — almost as if each postulate stood by itself, but in reality he derived them together from the nature of the moral self; and their peculiar status in his thought, as being moral postulates only, was due to his interpretation of scientific knowledge as a whole. So today the principles on which we understand the self as a human being and as a part of the environing universe cannot but condition, to a very large degree, our thought concerning immortality; and, in turn, in our spiritual experience faith in God, faith in freedom, and faith in immortality are likely to be most closely bound up together.

Any attempt, however, to think of immortality in interrelatedness with the main body of our reasoned beliefs confronts us immediately with those current interpretations of the human self which, if valid, preclude faith in immortality. Certain conceptions of the self, enunciated by important thinkers, if accepted, render faith in immortality positively irrational. Such, for example, is the conception of the self in the behaviorism of John B. Watson. According to Watson there is nothing in the self "which cannot be expressed in the plain facts of hereditary and acquired reactions and their integrations." He makes "thought highly integrated bodily activity and nothing more"; and he goes on to say: "When we study implicit bodily processes we are studying *thought;* just as when we study the way a golfer stands in addressing his ball and swinging his

club we are studying *golf*."[1] In such statements we have behaviorism presented, not simply as a psychological method which may fruitfully supplement other methods, but as a philosophy; and for this philosophy the self is wholly identified with man's physiological organism. Clearly, from the standpoint of this philosophy of the self, human immortality is ruled out in advance.

But philosophies of the self which differ from Watson's in important respects still are like his in their implications regarding immortality. Hardly any developed philosophy can share in Watson's rejection of such terms as consciousness, sensation, perception, attention, will, image and the like, when he says: "I frankly do not know what they mean, nor do I believe that anyone else can use them consistently."[2] Bertrand

[1] *Psychology from the Standpoint of a Behaviorist*, pp. 325, 326, 396.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. viii.

Russell, for example, has analyzed Watson's position and concludes with what he says is "the real crux of the whole matter, namely the question: Do we think?" He then cites, as a philosopher of almost any school would do, the fact that a blind man might know the whole of physics but could not know what things look like to people who see, and the fact that we can distinguish between the 'pleasant' and the 'unpleasant,' between imaginations and objects, between dreams and waking states. On such grounds as these he says: "I hold that self-observation can and does give us knowledge which is not a part of physics, and that there is no reason to deny the reality of 'thought.'" [1]

But while there is scarcely any developed philosophy which agrees with Watson in holding that consciousness and thought are nothing but subtle

[1] *Philosophy*, pp. 174, 175.

forms of bodily behavior, there are important philosophies which teach the inseparability of the human self from the human organism. Thus Professor Sellars, of the University of Michigan, in his volume entitled *Evolutionary Naturalism*, while insisting that consciousness is something not reducible to physical and biological processes, yet holds it to be only a quality or function of our bodily life. "Mind," he says, "is a physical category"; and again: "The mind is the brain as known in its functioning. It is the brain in its integrative capacities." And he affirms: "To me with my view of the identity of mind and brain, spirits are impossible." [1]

A similar conclusion with respect to immortality is reached by Professor Alexander in his great work, *Space, Time and Deity*. The whole structure of his fully elaborated metaphysics is of

[1] *Evolutionary Naturalism*, pp. 268, 278, 300.

such a nature as to leave no room for immortality. At the end of his study he wrote: "Should the extension of mind beyond the limits of the bodily life be verified . . . the larger part of the present speculation will have to be seriously modified or abandoned." [1]

To such a conclusion, indeed, do all philosophies which describe themselves as 'naturalistic' seem bound to come. For though, as in the case of Alexander, they may find it wholly irrational to reduce man's mental and spiritual experiences and activities to mere bodily processes, yet in their effort to regard man as a part of nature they feel themselves constrained to treat man's mental and spiritual life as being inherently inseparable from his body or brain. Thus, even though our contemporary naturalism is willing to grant that the human self is not *identical* with its physiological or-

[1] *Space, Time and Deity*, II, 423–425.

ganism, it closes the door against faith in immortality by teaching that the human self is *inseparable* from its physiological organism.

This naturalistic philosophy of the self, which treats it as so completely a part of nature as to be inherently inseparable from the bodily organism, stands in significant contrast to the estimate of the self which has been gaining ground rapidly in contemporary thought. The self is being increasingly conceived as a center of originality, of initiative, of creativity. The conception of the mind as being like a set of wax tablets on which nature writes, which was once the orthodox view of empiricism, does not fit very well the operation of the astronomer when he measures the diameter of Betelgeuse. The mind does not simply record, it discovers. The conception of the self as being simply a compound of heredity and environment is not a very satisfac-

tory explanation of the physicist when he achieves television. The self does not merely transmit experience, it transmutes experience and invents. The idea of the self as functioning in society only through memory and imitation — being simply a product of social customs and institutions — does not cover the prophets whose new wine of truth and faith and love bursts the old wine-skins of sacrosanct custom and makes them founders of a new spiritual or social order. The self does not always echo and copy; on occasion it creates.

There is, however, great danger that we shall treat this conception of the self as originative in a merely pragmatic fashion, without trying to think out its larger philosophical implications.

We say much today about man's control over nature and the limitless possibilities for the increase of that control. Is it not time to ask whether this power

of man to control nature has not some metaphysical meaning, which is basic for the interpretation of his nature and his destiny? Our education is being more and more shaped by the ideal of developing independent insight, critical and constructive thinking, active participation in group life, resourcefulness in discovering and achieving values. If this ideal is proving realizable, what does that mean for our understanding of the self? Less and less are men today able to entrust human progress to the blind forces of social evolution. Blind forces not only produce some by-products of good, they also destroy blindly. Man, we are insisting, must apply creative intelligence to the social process and thus contribute the new factors on which further social progress depends. The initiative which man has applied so successfully to exploration and invention and economic production must be applied to those

situations which are causing the arrest and defeat of social progress, if human evolution is to go on to new heights. But if this faith in man's intelligence as a decisive factor in social progress is at all justified, we should explore its meaning for our understanding of man's essential nature and of his place in the universe.

To the view of the self suggested by man's control over nature, by educational theory, and by the problems of social evolution we should not fail to add the religious estimate of the self. The estimate of the self upon which religion, in spite of the diversity of its experiences, converges is that the human self is in some real sense a partaker of the Divine nature. Whatever alienation between man and God has characterized religion in certain of its phases, that alienation stands in contrast to a more primary kinship and is capable of issuing in communion and union. Kinship between

man and God as the basis of man's sharing in the life of God — that is the conception of the self by which religion lives. In the words of Professor Montague: "The belief which lies at the heart of all religion is that the soul of man can somehow unite itself with the substance of the universe, be that substance personal or impersonal, and thereby attain to a vision of truth far surpassing in its depth and sublimity and in the peace, joy, and power that it brings, anything that mere reason or sense can afford." [1]

To this generic religious estimate of the self, however, should be added the more specific estimate which is characteristic of ethical religion in its full development. In ethical religion kinship with God and man is fully realized through the moral will. Jesus taught: "He that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my

[1] W. P. Montague, *Ways of Knowing*, p. 56.

brother, and sister, and mother." And this emphasis upon the moral will, as that through which man's divine kinship reaches its fullest expression, furnishes the religious basis for a growing creativeness in man. For it brings worship of God and creative living into organic relation with each other, so that as they alternate they also interpenetrate.

Thus religion, too, when it reaches the level of fully ethical religion, heightens the significance of the human self. Let me quote, as expressive of this religious estimate of the self, some lines by George Cabot Lodge, son of this University, whose poetic work was cut off by so early a death:

> Let us report and celebrate the Soul,
> In thought and word and deed, in life and death!
> Then may we feel, perchance, the God within us,
> Whose worship waits and who has slept so long

Revive at last, athletic and superb,
Stand forth from custom, creed and circumstance,
Reclaim his high inherent liberties,
And stem the rush of the resistless hours,
Till for a spacious interval, we see
The veils of darkness and deception fall
And leave us, eager of our enterprise,
Transparent to our own reality
Against the stilled tremendous heart of time.[1]

Religion and poetry, then, join with social ethics, with educational theory, and with man's record of scientific achievement in heightening the significance of the self. When we unite these points of view we get a conception of the self as a center of creative experience, as the decisive factor in social evolution, and as gaining truth and power through uniting itself with the substance of the universe. But then we are bound to ask whether

[1] *The Poems and Dramas of George Cabot Lodge*, vol. II, p. 90.

the self can really be understood in its creative activities, and in its profounder religious insights and experiences, except as we go on to conceive it as essentially psychical in its nature, as cause and not simply effect, as possessing metaphysical freedom, and — by reason of these characteristics — as enduring in time.

What, then, is the meaning of selfhood? Man is a part of nature, the naturalistic philosopher tells us; nature existed through aeons of time before man came into being, and it will exist through other aeons of time after man on this planet has ceased to be. And only as we think about man as a part of nature can we be intelligent about the conditions under which any destiny which is possible for him must be achieved. This is the central message of present-day naturalism. And in this message we should recognize an important contribution to our

working philosophy of life. Know as fully as possible the conditions of human action which arise out of the fact that man is a part of nature. Such is the gospel of naturalism, and to ignore it would be to jeopardize those spiritual interests which we may have most at heart.

But the naturalistic philosopher, as we have seen, puts a further construction upon the idea that man is a part of nature, which seems in danger of making the experiences of man less intelligible instead of more intelligible. For even though he may be willing to recognize the uniqueness of consciousness and thought and purpose, he will allow them to be only qualities and functions of the physiological organism. In other words, man's activities may be psychical but his being is physical; the supporting and perduring self — the self which *has* the experiences and activities — belongs to

the realm of physics. The naturalistic philosopher has brought back, at least in a relative sense, the idea of a knowable substantial self, but he insists that this substantial self shall be conceived primarily in physical terms.

But can the meaning of selfhood be thus fully extracted from the conception that man is a part of nature? There are, as we also have seen, traits of human experience which point towards a spiritualistic philosophy of the self. It is not easy to treat human thought and insight, human initiative, freedom and creativity, as nothing but products of nature, so long as our idea of nature is controlled — as with naturalists it seems to be controlled — by the conceptions of physics. May it not be precisely in terms of the psychical that we have to conceive the more enduring and supporting aspects of the self? And if this be the case — if we cannot avoid a spiritualistic philos-

ophy of the self — then will not the conception that man is a part of nature appear in a new light? Shall we not find ourselves in need, not of a naturalistic metaphysics for human selves, but of a spiritualistic metaphysics for physical nature? The mere raising of such questions as these is enough to show how crucial is our conception of the self for our general philosophy and metaphysics, as well as for faith in immortality.

Our question as to the meaning of selfhood, then, when viewed in its wider implications, is the question as to how to relate these two poles of contemporary thought: namely, that man is a part of nature, and that at the same time he is increasingly discovering and comprehending nature, exercising control over nature, and working creatively upon nature on the basis of a system of thoughts and ideals which we cannot but call super-physical. Can these two poles

of thought be related genuinely by a naturalistic metaphysics, which finds the supporting and enduring parts of reality only in the physical realm? Or do these two poles of thought require, as the basis of their interrelation, some form of spiritualistic metaphysics, which looks to the psychical realm for the ultimate clue to that which supports and endures?

For the moment, however, let us restrict this far-reaching question as to the meaning of selfhood to that single aspect of its bearing on faith in immortality, which, as we have seen, is being pointed out by naturalistic philosophers. Is the self intelligible only as inseparable from the physiological organism? Or may it be that the separability of the self is positively implied in its nature?

The fundamentally unique thing about selves, which distinguishes them from all the objects of physics, is that they can bring both the past and the

future to bear upon the present. In physics what is past acts no longer and what is future cannot yet begin to act. A sailing vessel is becalmed unless the wind is actually pressing upon its sails. The winds of yesterday and the winds of tomorrow cannot help to drive it forward today. So with physical force always; it acts only in the present. But a self can mold the present by the past and by the future. It can continue to obey in its prime the voices heard in its youth. It can discern the shadows which coming events cast before, and prepare to meet them. By memory and anticipation the self can gather in a wide range of past and future events and bring them decisively to bear upon a present event. The simplest forms of consciousness span some time, else we never could catch a melody or hear a sentence as a whole. But by memory, thought, and imagination, vast ranges of time may be spanned

and a rich content therefrom may be made to converge upon the present moment. Thus the forgotten work of the dead monk Mendel, on being rediscovered, remade the science of heredity; and the anticipation of the depletion of our present supplies of energy is stimulating scientists to endeavor to unlock the enormous energies concealed in the atom. Objective historical events, therefore, owe their determination to this power of selves to bring the past and the future to bear upon the present.

But this power of selves which appears in memory and anticipation, in retrospect and forecast, is essentially superphysical. A phonographic record can repeat today the song of yesterday, but that is not an instance of memory. The revolving disk is all oblivious of the number of times that it has been made to repeat its song. It has no awareness of its own past. But the remembering self

of the musician may recover some melody heard on the cotton plantations of the South, or on the wharves of Singapore, and make it the theme of a new musical composition. In such an instance a personal awareness of the past is the decisive thing. But a personal awareness of the past is something that lies beyond the realm of physics; it is super-physical.

Similarly anticipation or forecast is super-physical. Nature, it is true, sows seeds in the autumn which make possible the next summer's harvest. But if we should say that nature was preparing for a future harvest, we should be accused of making nature anthropomorphic. Nature sows the seeds because her winds blow according to purely physical laws. But if nature may not be anthropomorphic, we should at least allow man to be anthropomorphic. Man does consciously anticipate future seasons and prepare for future harvests, and his forecasting de-

termines when and where the seeds shall fall. Thus into the physical process is inserted a factor for which physical laws do not provide — a psychical factor whose laws must be psychical.

Now it is precisely upon these superphysical processes of memory and anticipation, together with present awareness, that the uniqueness and integrity of the self depends. When the continuity of these processes as connected with a given physiological individual is broken — as in cases of loss of personal identity or of extreme 'dissociation' — psychologists are wont to speak of multiple selves. Bodily individuality clearly does not suffice for the individuality of the self. It is, indeed, only a relative individuality that human bodies seem to possess. Their properties appear to be more generic than individual. Skin and bone from one body may be grafted upon another and no discrepancies result.

Whether a criminal could escape identification by having skin from another's thumbs grafted on in the place of his own may be something that only future ingenuity can determine; but success would mean simply that one more rogue had avoided reaping what he had sown. The unique and integral self centers in the psychic and not in the physical realm.

But on the uniqueness and integrity of the self, depends its creativity. This point was effectively brought out by James Ward in his *Psychological Principles*. One's personality, he wrote, "will not be shown merely in what a man is but in what he is striving to be. But to be personal, the ideal for which he strives must be his own, must originate in himself — however impersonal its goal may be. These two characteristics, stability as the basis of progression, and originality in shaping its course, seem to be the

two essentials of any living personality." And in accordance with this conception Ward affirmed that all the aspects of the development of human character "must be regarded in the light of the one organic whole on which their meaning and value depends, namely, the creative synthesis which reveals and must perfect personality." [1] In these statements we have a psychologist's clear recognition that the uniqueness and integrity of the self, and its creativity, are intimately bound up together. Creative synthesis is that which reveals personality, but it requires as its basis a consciousness of self as a continuing whole.

Thus reflection on the meaning of selfhood shows that the supporting and enduring aspects of the self are to be found not in the physical but in the psychical realm. The self as manifested in memory and anticipation — and so as

[1] *Psychological Principles*, pp. 464, 470.

bringing the past and the future to bear on the present — the self as unique and integral in all its manifestations, the self as revealed in creative synthesis, is super-physical. And this super-physical character pertains to that which is most basic and enduring in the self. This self of ours, from its first experiences in infancy on, is unitary precisely in the respects in which it is inner and psychical. This is what the *Gestalt*-psychology is showing us.[1] And the development of the self consists in the maintenance and increase of inner integrity in response to the enormous variety of physical and social stimuli. When this inner integrity seems to be broken we find the phenomena to be such that we speak of them as belonging to several selves. But if this inner integrity remains continuous and increases in firmness of texture, the individual attains to a rational and moral

[1] K. Koffka, *The Growth of the Mind*, pp. 131 ff.

selfhood which is able to discover or create coherence in its environing world.

We are led, then, to the judgment that the separability of the self as a psychical reality from the bodily organism is positively implied in the nature of selfhood. A naturalistic philosophy of the self cannot make intelligible the phenomena of the self, whereas they can be made intelligible by a spiritualistic philosophy of the self. For that which gives our selfhood its coherent and enduring character is super-physical and inherently psychical.

Nor need we, in maintaining that the constitutive principles of man's selfhood are psychic, ignore the importance of viewing man also as a part of nature. For man's bodily life can only be understood as a portion of the physical world, and man's bodily life and his psychical life are intimately bound up together. For this interrelation between the two

we may best borrow Professor Laird's figure of partnership. In his admirable little volume, *The Idea of the Soul*, Professor Laird concludes that the self is "only a partner with its body on this planet"; but he holds that, though each partner has its own distinctive being, yet they influence each other profoundly. Certainly, if man's creativity is to incarnate itself in nature he needs to know as fully as possible the conditions for his action which nature, including his own body, supplies. But it seems equally evident that his creativity involves an active partnership with the body, on the part of a psychical self such as we have been seeking to characterize — a self possessing an inner integrity and a *rapport* with the past and the future which nature as physical cannot provide. Just because the partnership is active and significant it is dissolvable. We must hold that the separability of

our psychical life from our bodies is implied in the nature of that life, and that something much stronger than intimations of immortality arises from reflection on the capacities of our unfolding selfhood.

We must now go on to ask: Will this self, which emerges with the development of the physiological organism, but which becomes a unique creative whole separable from the organism, be perpetuated? We have seen that the self possesses such inner, psychic integrity that its destiny is not necessarily bound up with the destiny of the body, so that its survival after the death of the body is intelligible; but will this self become a permanent part of the universe? Will that which possesses inner individuality and creative life also be an heir of immortality?

This question whether selves become permanent, immortal parts of the uni-

verse evidently depends upon the character of the universe as well as upon the nature of the self. If selves are accidental by-products of the universe, the necessary basis for believing in their immortality is wanting, even though, because of their psychic integrity, they might project themselves beyond the body — as sparks are borne upward from an evening campfire, only to be soon extinguished in the enveloping night. But if selves are expressive of the deeper reality of the universe, and if they come into being through the establishment of organic relations between them and that deeper reality, then their immortality is that towards which both reason and faith point.

The belief that selves in their present existence are expressive of the deeper nature of reality is, then, the necessary presupposition of a rational faith in the immortality of selves. Are our finite

selves, and the system of nature of which they are a part, conditioned upon a Cosmic Self? Is finite creative synthesis which characterizes human personality a part of a cosmic creative synthesis? Is the human mind, as it seeks to create and conserve value, in organic relation with a Cosmic Mind that is creating and conserving value? It is upon the grounds for an affirmative answer to these questions that a rational faith in immortality must finally rest.

Thus, broadly speaking, we have arrived at the position at which the inquiry into the reasonableness of faith in immortality almost always arrives, namely, that immortality and theism are bound up together. If a theistic philosophy is more adequate for interpreting the universe than a naturalistic philosophy, then belief in immortality is rational. Belief in a personal God carries with it belief in the immortality of finite

persons sharing his life. But let us not fail to note the special form of the theistic question to which the present inquiry has led us. In interrogating nature, man has to learn to put his questions in the right way, else he gets no answer at all. So in philosophy the gaining of an answer to a question often depends to a large degree upon a right understanding of the question itself. The theistic question as we here have developed it asks: Does the universe reveal a process of creative synthesis such as is intelligible only as the working of a Cosmic Mind that is creating and conserving value? This question implies that the creative synthesis, though manifest on a cosmic scale, is incomplete, and that man may work with God in carrying it forward.

Now perhaps I may be permitted to sketch the outline of an affirmative answer to this question — although the filling in of the sketch as a whole cannot

here be attempted — because our inquiry into the meaning of selfhood does permit the filling in of a certain aspect of the answer.

The first great reason which leads me to believe in a Cosmic Mind is the order and organization which the universe discloses. All our knowledge of the universe is based on its orderly and organized character. If there were no universal laws in physical nature, the spectroscope would tell us nothing about the make-up of sun and stars. If there were no universal laws in the realm of animate nature, symptoms would not aid in the discovery of the causes of disease, and serums would be valueless for their cure. And on the basis of the order which these laws express the universe has attained organization on a vast scale — such organization as we see in our solar system, in geologic cycles, and in the system of animate nature; such organi-

zation as we see in atoms, molecules, crystals, cells, and physiological organisms. Now why this vast and intricate organization in the universe, including system within system, instead of merely random action — like the wind among sand dunes? Is there anything that can render it intelligible except the presence of Mind in the cosmos? A vast synthetic process, transforming what would otherwise be random action, has been going on, and such a process we can understand only as the work of a Cosmic Creative Reason.

The second ground for theistic belief I find in the extent to which the cosmos has produced progress. If we are willing to admit that we possess some objectively valid ideas of value, we cannot but see progress in the transition from the first beginnings of life in the primeval slime of the ocean beds to man's achievements of Truth, Beauty, and Goodness.

Not to see progress in such a transition would be disloyalty to the pioneers, prophets, poets, and saints of the earth and to everything in history which has nurtured and inspired them. Such a manifestation of progress is evidence that a cosmic creative synthesis is taking place. The fact that the progress has been slow, halting, and devious, and that it has suffered intermissions and relapses, teaches us something of the difficulty of the synthesis and of its cost; but it should not make us deny that the progress is real and that it is deeply rooted in the cosmos. Now, according to all our experience, persistence in the conquest of difficulties and the creation of value is a manifestation of moral will. Hence the cosmic creative synthesis points to a Cosmic Moral Will.

The third reason for theistic belief, however, is the one on which, in conclusion, I wish to dwell. This reason is

that man's moral and religious experience find their most adequate interpretation when they are recognized to be a coöperation and a communion with a Cosmic Moral Will. The significance of this reason we shall best be able to see if we return for a moment to the meaning of selfhood.

The self, as we have seen, is characterized by its being a unique whole having inner integrity and creative power. But it is characterized no less by membership in a larger whole to which it is inwardly akin. And these two aspects of the self belong together; neither of them can come into being without the other. One can affirm his individuality only in relation to a community. Thought develops through communication. Individuality ripens through participation in the individuality of others. A free personality requires for its full development a free community. No sooner does a man

gain a new vision in art or ethics or religion than he tries to collect a colony of like-minded people who can share and cultivate the vision. Even the great individualist is great because he discovers in advance of his fellows the deeper needs and possibilities of humanity. Ibsen once wrote to Björnsen: "It seems to me as if I were separated from both God and men by a great and infinite void"; yet Ibsen was a forecaster of social progress and an interpreter of universal human motives. Thus, everywhere, individuality and community, origination and participation, creativity and kinship belong together and mutually condition each other.

From this twofold aspect of our selfhood emerges man's highest ideal — the ideal of a community of creative personalities which shall be inclusive of every personality. Each personality, as Professor Hocking has said, contains at

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least a tiny rill of novelty, and therefore is able to make its own unique contribution to a community of personalities; and each personality, though he be a veritable torrent of novelty, needs membership in a community for which his novelty has value. Personality as an end in itself and society as a realm of ends — such is the ideal to which the twofold meaning of selfhood points.

But advance towards this ideal is a process of creative synthesis in which, ultimately, every self must come to bear a part. And this creative process confronts difficulties that seem to expand as the scope of the process expands. The action of individual selves is often destructive of a real community of selves, and collective action often smothers the creative in the individual. Why then is the process not self-defeating — mankind in the mass failing to nourish individual powers, and individual powers

proving too feeble to leaven the mass of mankind?

Self-defeating the process at times actually has been; but mankind has proven to have another resource, and this resource it has been the peculiar province of religion to supply. Religion has been able to give man that experience of membership in a larger whole through which his inner powers may be renewed and heightened; and through this experience he may go forward with the creation of that true community of life with his fellowmen which he needs and which is still so largely unachieved. Spirit engenders spirit, faith evokes faith, love begets love — this is the paradoxical law by which the higher synthesis of life must be made. Religion resolves the paradox and makes the law effective when it brings man into communion with a Cosmic Moral Will, and thereby enables him to know in present inward

experience that creative love which he is seeking to make dominant in the world about him.

For the threefold interrelationship, to which our discussion has pointed, between individuality, community, and membership in a still larger whole, I venture to offer an illustration. There is a method of teaching children to play musical instruments which is a surprise to some of us of the older generation. According to this method children acquire the mastery of their instruments by being formed at once into an orchestra under the guidance of their teacher. They play together as well as they can before they play separately, and they are stimulated to playing separately because of the inspiration of playing together and in order that they may play together better. The rapidity with which a group of children thus become able to render orchestral pieces well is, to the uniniti-

ated, truly marvelous. But there never could be this transition from fumbling, discordant playing to harmonious playing, without the musical conceptions of the composer and the sympathetic, guiding, coöperative skill of the teacher.

After the analogy of this illustration we may find a growing harmony in the universe. In the producing of this harmony, at least in its higher stages, finite members must bear an individual part. But it is not as isolated individuals that the finite members can best learn to make their own contributions harmonious; they need membership in a community whose integrity depends upon the working of its members together to produce harmony. In such a process the ultimate harmony will be preceded by discord, because the individuals start with untrained powers and dim conceptions and often take their parts waywardly or listlessly. But there is in-

spiration through comradeship in a high enterprise. There is stimulus in the realization that full harmony cannot be achieved unless each plays his part well. And there is a central Mind and Will, with clear conceptions of what true harmony must be and with sympathetic understanding of each individual effort, seeking to inspire them all and to bring them all together into full and rich accord.

Thus does man's moral and religious experience find its most adequate interpretation when it is recognized as coöperation and communion with a Cosmic Moral Will. For in this interpretation the conditions for the realization of the full meaning of selfhood are supplied. Selfhood means creative individuality, and it means membership in a community for which creative individuality has value. But such a community exists only in very fragmentary fashion and remains

largely to be achieved. Hence the significance of fellowship with a deeper Life that is intent on realizing throughout the universe an ever-increasing harmony. In such a fellowship creative individuality is renewed and the effort to achieve among men a true harmony is sustained and conserved.

The grounds for theistic belief which I have undertaken to sketch are: the order and organization which appear throughout the universe, the extent to which the universe has proven to be a producer of progress, and the fulfilment of selfhood which comes through interpreting human individuality as an integral part of a cosmic process which is creative of harmony. For reasons such as these I believe a theistic philosophy to be more rational than a naturalistic philosophy and I find the completest synthesis of experience through the idea of a Cosmic Moral Will.

But in a universe in which a Cosmic Moral Will is the deepest reality human selves are by their inner nature fitted to bear an immortal part. They rise above the physical order to control it. They discover ideals of Truth, Beauty, and Goodness and work creatively for their realization. They have intrinsic worth as ends in themselves, and they contain the potentiality of a realm of ends of which love is the law. And through their supreme prophets they learn the ways of spiritual life and gain a knowledge of God as love which enables them to live the eternal life in the midst of time. They are thus heirs of immortality in a universe in which a God of creative love is the deepest reality.

Our study of selfhood has led us to contemplate the human self on three main levels: On the first level we learn certain indispensable conditions for the origin, development, and activity of the

self; but the essential nature of the self appears only when we consider the second level, where the self is a psychic super-physical reality posssessing inner integrity and the power to act creatively in the midst of physical nature; but our thought was obliged to pass to a third level, where the self appears as a member of a larger whole which reaches beyond human fellowship and aspiration and includes Divine Reality. We may best think of the relation of these three levels if we consider that on the first level physical nature is furnishing, in the human body, the matrix for the self; that on the second level the self becomes its own determiner and as such can dispense in the end with its matrix, the body; and that on the third level the self discovers its ultimate destiny as an integral part of a spiritual universe.

Even from the theistic point of view man's existence as a part of nature sometimes seems the overwhelming fact:

When I consider the heavens, the work
of thy fingers,
The moon and the stars, which thou hast
ordained;
What is man, that thou art mindful of
him?
And the son of man, that thou visitest
him?

Nevertheless, in the end theistic faith exalts man as a creative individual, able to control nature:

For thou hast made him but little lower
than God,
And crownest him with glory and honor.
Thou makest him to have dominion over
the works of thy hands;
Thou hast put all things under his feet.

And when theistic faith is penetrated by the teachings and spirit of Christ it brings men into such a kinship with God as is itself an earnest of immortality:

Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

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